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introducing a reactive gas into said internal environment of said process chamber with said reactive gas at a first partial pressure relative to a chamber pressure of said internal environment;

adjusting said first partial pressure to a second partial pressure; and

unloading the semiconductor wafer from said process chamber, while said process chamber remains at said steady-state processing temperature and while said internal environment is at said second partial pressure.

2. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said steady-state processing temperature is between 800° C and 1200° C.

3. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said steady-state processing temperature is between 200° C and 800° C.

4. (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said adjusting of said first partial pressure to said second partial pressure comprises introducing an inert gas into said internal environment, wherein said second partial pressure between said reactive gas and said inert gas causes said reactive gas to be at a preselected partial pressure.

5. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 4, wherein said preselected partial pressure of said reactive gas is between 0.1 Torr and 760 Torr.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein said inert gases is taken from the group consisting of argon, helium and nitrogen.

7. (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 4, wherein said preselected partial pressure of said inert gas is between 0.1 Torr and 760 Torr.

8. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said preselected partial pressure comprises a partial pressure of said process chamber between about 0.1 Torr and 760 Torr.

LAW OFFICES OF  
MACPHERSON KWOK CHEN  
& HEID LLP

2402 Michelson Drive  
Suite 210  
Irvine, CA 92612  
(949) 752-7040  
FAX (949) 752-7049

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein said reactive gas comprises a gas taken from the group consisting of O<sub>2</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub>, TaETO, NO, N<sub>2</sub>O, and H<sub>2</sub>O.

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10. (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said adjusting includes introducing N<sub>2</sub> into said internal environment to reduce said first partial pressure to said second partial pressure.

11. (Previously Amended) A method of forming a thin film on a semiconductor wafer comprising:  
heating a process chamber to a steady-state processing temperature;  
loading a semiconductor wafer into a process chamber, said process chamber being under vacuum pressure;  
introducing a process gas at a first partial pressure into said process chamber;  
adjusting said first partial pressure to a second partial pressure; and  
removing said semiconductor wafer from said process chamber while said process gas is at said second partial pressure.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein said loading of a semiconductor wafer comprises loading a plurality of semiconductor wafers and removing of said semiconductor wafer comprises removing said plurality of semiconductor wafers.

13. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 12, wherein said loading and removing of a plurality of semiconductor wafers are accomplished using a robot arm comprising multiple end-effectors for grasping said plurality of semiconductor wafers.

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14. (Twice Amended) A method of forming a thin film on a semiconductor wafer comprising:  
heating a process chamber to a steady-state temperature;  
establishing a first pressure in said process chamber;  
loading at least one semiconductor wafer into said process chamber while said process chamber is at said first pressure;

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FAX (949) 752-7049

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and

introducing a process gas at a first partial pressure relative to said first pressure into said process chamber to allow processing of said at least one semiconductor wafer to commence;

varying said first partial pressure to a second partial pressure which causes said processing of said semiconductor wafer to cease; and

removing the at least one semiconductor wafer from said process chamber while said process chamber is at said second partial pressure.

15. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said steady-state temperature is a process temperature between about 800° C and 1200° C.

16. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said first pressure is maintained in the range of between 0.1 Torr and 760 Torr.

17. The method of Claim 14, wherein said process chamber is a resistively heated furnace.

18. The method of Claim 14, wherein said process gas is O<sub>2</sub>.

19. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said varying said first partial pressure to a second partial pressure comprises pulling a vacuum pressure within said process chamber.

20. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said removing the at least one semiconductor wafer from said process chamber while said process chamber is at said second partial pressure is accomplished while said second partial pressure is substantially at vacuum pressure.

21. The method of Claim 14, wherein said loading of said at least one semiconductor wafer is accomplished in the absence of substantially all oxygen.

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REMARKS